

Missouri State Archives

Finding Aid [998.355]

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Algoa Prison Photograph Collection

Abstract: Nine photographs of the Algoa Prison Farm, aka Algoa Intermediate Reformatory, on the outskirts of Jefferson City.

Extent: 9 images

Physical Description: Photographs

Location: Missouri State Archives; Stacks

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Alternative Formats: TIF

Access Restrictions: None

Publication Restrictions: None

Preferred Citation: [item description], [date]; *Algoa Prison Photograph Collection*, Record Group 998.355; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

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HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Contract labor at the Penitentiary was abolished between 1917 and 1919. In its place, prison industries such as farms allowed for state-run, non-contract labor. Inmates were put to work as farmers and the goods produced were used to feed inmates and were also sold to the public for a profit. Three farms were bought by the State Prison Board around 1919. The 458-acre property that would become Prison Farm No. 3 at Algoa was bought from W.A. Dallmeyer. The primary industry at Farm No. 3 was dairy.

Around this time, Corrections staff and Missourians advocated for an intermediate institution that would house young men aged 17 to 25. These first-time offenders were too old for the Boonville Reformatory for Boys and often too young and “soft” for the Missouri State Penitentiary. Carol Bates from St. Louis was one of the more influential advocates. She served on the Missouri Welfare League. The Missouri General Assembly approved the creation of such a reformatory in 1915, but it would be 15 years before money was appropriated and the site built. Another farm adjacent to Prison Farm No. 3 was purchased from a man named Ewing. This 319-acre farm brought the total acreage to 777. Inmates began being received in March 1932. They lived in dormitories and continued to work the dairy farm. Over the next several decades, the site would expand even more. The largest expansion was in the late 1930s when the WPA built several more dorms and other buildings at Algoa.

Corrections was reorganized in September 1981, and the new Department of Corrections and Human Resources was created. The first crisis addressed by the new Department was prison overcrowding. In response, several new facilities were built or existing ones remodeled. Algoa Intermediate Reformatory became the medium security Algoa Correctional Center (ACC).

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Related Collections

MS297 Mark Schreiber Collection
RG000.114 Department of Corrections State Documents
RG114 Department of Corrections Employee Photograph Collection
RG114 Department of Corrections Photograph Collection
RG213 Missouri State Penitentiary

Additional External Resources

The Missouri History Museum in St. Louis maintains the following collections:

[#A1073 Missouri Welfare League Records, 1919-1950](#)

[#F9016 Reformatory at Algoa Farm, Jefferson City](#), part of [#P0141 Penal Institutions](#)

The State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia has one photograph of Algoa:

[#P0076 Missouri National Guard Photographs, Algoa Reformatory Correctional Center](#)

SHSM also maintains the following collections:

[#C2636 Prisoner Advocacy and Education Project Records, 1971-1982](#)

[#C3035 Estella Wilferth Papers, 1912-1962](#)

[#C3475 Missouri Association for Social Welfare Papers, 1908-1971](#)

[#C3911 Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice Records, 1973-1982](#)

[#R1418 Melvin C. DeWitt Papers](#)

The State Historical Society of Missouri in Kansas City maintains the following collection:

[#K0609 Richard Lawrence Matthis Papers, 1997-2013](#)

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1934-1938

Arrangement: None

Scope and Content

Algoa employee George Leland Murphy took a few photographs of the grounds of Algoa during his time there. Murphy started at the institution sometime in 1934. He was employed at first as a dormitory master then the assistant horticulturist. He does not appear on the employee list in the 1939-1940 Blue Book.

These photographs have been digitized and are on the Z Drive.

They are also on Flickr:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/missouristatearchives/albums/72157627347624221>.

Container List

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	103	127	This is the main gate leading to Algoa Prison Farms. The metal gate is closed. Either side of the gate is made of stone.	1934-1938
	103	128	View of "The Hill," the building complex for Algoa, as seen from the water tower. There are six dormitory buildings and an administration/all-purpose building situated on three sides of a square lawn. There is a tower in the middle of the square. Men are lined up outside the dorms ready for dinner. A small band plays on the lawn next to a flag.	1934
	103	129	View of the new combination administration building and hospital in front of the water tower. The siren tower and a few dorms are also visible.	1937-1938
	103	130	The old administration/all-purpose building now functions as a dining room, gym, and schoolrooms in the wings.	1937-1938
	103	131	View of the Algoa building complex from the water tower.	1938
	103	132	View of the Algoa building complex from the water tower.	1938
	103	133	An inmate nicknamed "Eight Ball" poses for the camera. In the background is Dormitory #1. The back of the photo says Eight Ball was convicted of stealing 100 pounds of railroad iron and sentenced to two years. It also says he is from Taylor, MO, which is an unincorporated town in Marion County. Attempts to determine his real name have thus far been unsuccessful.	1934-1938
	103	134	The Algoa power plant lies at the foot of a hill and exhales steam into the wintry air. In the distance are the dairy farm and rock quarry.	1934-1938

	103	135	The Missouri River as seen from the Algoa water tower. Bare hills and trees. Winter.	1934-1938
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